NATIONAL MUSEUM
18 AUG 1970
OF VICTORIA

TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

G.P.O. BOX 68A
HOBART 7001

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BULLETIN OF THE TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB.

Price 20 cent p.a.

August, 1970

NEXT MEETING will be held at the Royal Society Room, Tasmanian Museum on Thursday August 20th. at 7.45 pm.
SPEAKER: Dr. P.A. Tyler. Illustrated Address.
SUBJECT: "Life in Lakes."

FIVE MINUTE TALK: Mr. D. Milledge.

LAST OUTING: Was to Grass Tree Hill and Bowen Park area and the leader was Dr. G.C. Bratt who directed our search for lichens. We now have 23 different specimens of lichen, one of which was Heteradia meullerii - a lichen which has not been found in many places and for which Dr. Bratt was searching. He has discovered 60 species previously unlisted in Tasmania.

NEXT OUTING: Leader: Mrs. T.L. Stephens.
Area: Cole River Valley and Brown Mountain.
Object: To ascertain what regeneration has occured since the Club visited this area in September, 1967. (after the Bush Fires).
Meet: The Prince Theatre at 9.30 a.m.
Date: Saturday 22nd. August.

CORRESPONDENCE: You will be interested to hear that we have heard from our newly-elected Japanese member. He has sent some colourful brochures about Japanese National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. These will be displayed at our next meeting.

JUNIOR NATURAL HISTORY PRIZE: Any person under 16 (member or non-menber) may enter for this prize. It will be a project of their own choice, on some natural history subject. The project should be handed in to the Secretary by Thursday October 15th. Prize will be awarded on Thursday November 19th. which is the final meeting of the yaer.

QUIZ:- What is the longest animal recorded? A JELLYFISH! It - including its tentacles - measured 120 feet! Not all jellyfish can boast this length - in fact some could be comfortably accommodated on the tip of one's finger. Some jellyfish have not been called 'sea-nettles' for nothing for they are armed with a multitude of stinging cells. While these tentacles are useful for defense, their prime function is to capture their prey.

Stinging cells are marvels of engineering. They consist of a tiny bulb full of paralysing drug, a microscopic coiled tube, and a hair-trigger. The lightest touch on the trigger - and out shoots the tube, a needle-sharp point punctures the skin, and in flows the poison.

The technical name for these stinging cells is 'nematocyst' meaning a thread (the tube) and a bladder (the bulb). Dozens of 'stingers' lie crowded together in batteries, so that anything brushing against them receives an instantaneous broadside. By thrashing about to get free, the prey is stung again and again.

But this is not all. Other cells aid the stingers. Some are gummy and stick fast, others curl round and entangle the prey. The different weapons are arranged in groups. The sticky and entangling ones, which have longer triggers, are on the outside and secure the victim; then the stingers which have the shorter triggers, deliver the 'coup de grace'.

Essentially a jellyfish consists of two parts: a swimming 'bell' which varies considerably in shape from one species to another, and a number of appendages suspended from the bell, the most prominent being the tentacles. A hollow stomach ending in a primitive mouth hangs from the middle of the bell.

Jellyfish are found in all seas of the world, from the Arctic to the Antarctic. Most of them live near the surface, but some have been brought up in trawls from more than a mile down.

Surprising as it sounds, jellyfish are not confined to the sea. Occationally tiny ones, three-quarters of an inch or less across, are found in waters which have been artificially heated. They can be found in a tank of tropical fish, and they have also been found in the warm water tanks of botanical gardens, in a colliery reservoir, and in the Essex Ship Canal

A specimen of the lion's mane jellyfish (Cyannea) taken off the coast of Massachusetts many years ago had a lens-shaped bell 7½ feet across and 3 feet thick, with nearly

1,000 tentacles, some more than 120 feet long. This made it the longest animal that has ever been recorded. It probably weighed not less than 200 pounds - or more than a 14 stone man.

* * *

ANIMAL IN DANGER

The Cretan wild goat (Capri hircus aegagrus) was formerly found in every country round the eastern Mediterranean, but during the present century it became confined to a very small region around the Gorge of Samaria in the White Mountains of Crete, where it is called the 'kri-kri'. After the last war even these survivors were threatened, and the Greek Government decided in 1954 to transport a number of them to some of the islets off the north coast of Crete, where, cared for in semi-captivity, they are flourishing. At present there are thought to be about 100 of them on the various islands.

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